



Judicial Council of California

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July 2, 2025

Hon. Isaac Bryan
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Senate Bill 676 (Limón), as amended March 24, 2025—Oppose
Hearing: Assembly Natural Resources Committee—July 7, 2025

Dear Assembly Member Bryan:

The Judicial Council opposes SB 676, which would require, for a project located in a geographic area that was damaged by fire for which the Governor declared a state of emergency on or after January 1, 2023, and where the project is not otherwise exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as specified, the lead agency to prepare the record of proceedings concurrently with the administrative process. The bill would also require an action or proceeding brought to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul the certification of an environmental impact report, or the adoption of a negative declaration or mitigation negative declaration, for the project to be resolved, to the extent feasible, within 270 calendar days of the filing of the certified record of proceedings.

This is problematic as CEQA actions are already entitled under current law to calendar preference “over all other civil actions” pursuant to section 21167.1(a) of the Public Resources Code in both the superior courts and the Courts of Appeal.

Imposing an expedited 270-day judicial review timeline on top of existing CEQA calendar preferences is arbitrary and likely to be unworkable in practice. This limited timeframe is especially restrictive if the court of appeal or the California Supreme Court must also decide some portion of a CEQA case. Even assuming that no extensions of time are granted for any aspect of the proceedings, it takes an estimated six months to get a case to hearing in the superior court, plus the additional time for the judge to decide and issue a decision.

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Unlike other “judicial streamlining” legislation, which the Judicial Council categorically opposes due to calendaring pressures, SB 676 deviates even further by seeking to require judicial streamlining not just to a particular project but to a broad and densely populated geographical area of Los Angeles where each parcel of land is potentially a cause of action. The bill applies to any project located in an area that was damaged by a fire for which the Governor declared a state of emergency on or after January 1, 2023, and given the devastation in our fire-damaged regions, the courts cannot possibly estimate how many potential causes of action would be required to be “streamlined” under this proposed legislation.

Senate Bill 676 also requires the Judicial Council to adopt rules of court to implement the bill. The aforementioned unworkable language in SB 676 presents not only an incalculable obligation for the courts to undertake in terms of anticipated workload but it also presents an impossible task for the Judicial Council because it requires the Council to adopt new rules of court to attempt to manage many different projects and many different CEQA lawsuits. The Council cannot conceivably adopt an appropriate rule of court that would adequately account for the myriad causes of action the courts would receive should this legislation succeed as currently drafted.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council opposes SB 676.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Heather Resetarits at 916-323-3121.

Sincerely,



Cory T. Jasperson
Director
Governmental Affairs

CTJ/HR/jh

cc: Members, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Hon. Monique Limón, Member of the Senate, 21st District
Lawrence Lingbloom, Chief Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
John Fitzpatrick, Consultant, Assembly Republican Office of Policy
Jith Meganathan, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
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